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EXTRACT FROM AN ADDRESS

To the people of the United States on the subject of the report of a Committee of the House of Representatives, appointed to "Examine and report, whether monies drawn from the Treasury, have been faithfully applied to the objects for which they were appropriated, and whether the same have been regularly accounted for". Which report was presented on the 29th of April, 1800, By Oliver Wolcott, late Secretary of the Treasury of the United States.

3d. The expenses of the officers and clerks, attached to the Seat of government, for the removal of themselves and families from Philadelphia to Washington, and amounting, as is stated, to the sum of 32,372 Dollars and 34 Cents, the Committee are of the opinion "was drawn from the Treasury, and expended without any legal authority".

The act, establishing the temporary and permanent seat of the government of the United States, was passed on the 16th of July 1790, at which time, Congress and the public officers were convened in New York. The act directed, that prior to the first Monday in December 1790, all the offices should be removed to Philadelphia, *where they were directed to remain, until the first Monday in December 1800. No provision was made for defraying any expenses, incident to the removal from New York, to Philadelphia.*

The Section, directing the removal from Philadelphia to Washington, and upon which the Committee have founded their opinion, is expressed in the following words.

“That on the said first Monday *in December in the*
 “*year 1800*, the seat of the government of the United
 “States, shall, by virtue of this Act be transferred to
 “the district and place aforesaid; and all OFFICES, at-
 “*tached to the said seat of government*, shall accord-
 “ingly *be removed thereto, by their respective holders*,
 “and shall, after the said day, cease to be exercised
 “elsewhere; *and that the necessary expense of such re-*
 “*moval*, shall be *defrayed* out of the duties on imports
 “and tonnage, of which *a sufficient sum is hereby ap-*
 “*propriated*”.

In March 1791, after the removal from New York to Philadelphia, Congress, by a special law, directed,
 “that there be allowed to the Clerks, employed in the
 “several offices, attached to the Seat of Government, in
 “addition to their respective salaries, their reasonable
 “and necessary expenses, incurred by the removal of
 “Congress, from the City of New York, to the City of
 “Philadelphia.”

During the same Session, a temporary addition was made to the Salaries of the Attorney-General, Comptroller, Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, Auditor and Register, which was sufficient to cover the expenses of the removal.

On the 24th of April, 1800, Congress by Law, authorised the President, to direct the various offices to be removed to Washington, at any time, *after the end of the then session*, and before the time appointed, *for such removal, by the Act of July 16th, 1790.*

By the same act of April, 1800, a sum not exceeding fifteen thousand dollars, was appropriated for providing furniture, for the house, allotted for the President of the United States; a sum not exceeding nine thousand dollars, for furniture, for the Capitol, and for the removal of the records and papers of the two Houses of

Congress; a sum not exceeding ten thousand dollars for making footways, for the greater convenience of the members of both Houses of Congress, and a sum not exceeding five thousand dollars, for the purchase of Books, necessary for the use of Congress, and for fitting up a suitable apartment for containing them. The execution of all these directions, except in respect to the purchase of Books, was committed to the Secretaries of the four Executive Departments.

In the Bill, a provision was at first inserted, or proposed, for allowing a sum to each of the Clerks, proportioned to their respective Salaries; but this clause was rejected, when it was understood, that the act of July 16th, 1790, *authorized the allowance of all necessary expenses*, both to the Clerks and officers. I distinctly recollect to have been present in the House of Representatives, to have been consulted by several members, and to have then expressed an opinion, that a special provision, for the Clerks, was unnecessary.

The avowed motive for passing the act of April 1800, for expediting the removal of the offices, was, that it would stimulate the exertions of the citizens of Washington, to make better provision for the accommodation of Congress, than could otherwise be expected.—Some reliance was placed on the exertions of the executive officers, and I trust, that experience proved, it was well founded.

The Committee observe, that the appropriation made by the act of July 16, 1790, “is indefinite in its nature”, and that “*perhaps some contrariety of opinion* may exist, as to the extent of the expense it was intended to cover.”—They however “conceive, that a *strict adherence to the letter of the Law* would confine the appropriation to the expenses, actually incurred, in removing the *books, papers, records and furniture of the respective offices.*”

If there was perceived to be ground for a "*contrariety of opinion*," the obligation of declaring an opinion that the expenditure was "*without any legal authority*", is not obvious, as the Law had been *completely executed*, and as even an erroneous construction could lead to *no future inconvenience*.

The Committee have not said, and I presume will never say, that the construction, which prevailed, was *inequitable*; their objection rests solely on a supposed departure from the *strict letter of the Law*; I am willing that what has been done, shall be examined by this criterion.

The Law declares, that the NECESSARY EXPENSE of removing the OFFICES, shall be defrayed out of the duties on imports and tonnage, of which a SUFFICIENT SUM is appropriated. This appropriation was indeed, in a certain sense, "*indefinite*," but it cannot be denied, that it was *coextensive with the "necessary expense."*

This "*necessary expense*", thus expressly authorized by law, was that occasioned by the removal of certain "*offices*"; the Committee say, that the *strict letter of the Law*, will confine the appropriation to the expenses of removing the "*Books, papers, records and furniture*;"—if this be true, it seems to be a necessary inference, that, according to a *strict* definition of the term *office*, the *Books, papers, records and furniture of an office* are, in fact, *the office*.

An execution of the law on this principle, would have been very unsatisfactory to the citizens of Washington, it would have been deemed full evidence of a malignant hostility to the Seat of Government, and have been justly pronounced, by all men, to be malicious and perverse.

It was my understanding of the Law, *that the institutions of the Government were to be removed to Wash-*

ington, and at the public expense; this construction was doubted by no one, before the appointment of the Committee of investigation; no person can, in imagination, separate these *institutions* from the *individuals of which they are composed*; these consisted of the officers, clerks, messengers and their families; and there were cogent reasons, why the allowances ought, on every principle of justice and policy, to comprise a full indemnification.

The Session of Congress terminated on the 14th of May 1800, only twenty days after the act passed. The President, in compliance with the expectation of Congress, then directed the removal to take place *as soon as possible*, and it was actually accomplished, in the month of June.

It was as much a public stipulation, that the offices of Government should remain in Philadelphia until December 1800, as that they should be removed to Washington *at that time*:—the *losses* in consequence of engagements for *Rent in Philadelphia, from June till December 1800*, became therefore a just charge against the public.

In consequence of the *short notice* which was given, many persons attached to the Seat of Government, had not engaged Houses or Lodgings in Washington, and were obliged to live, for some time, at expensive Taverns; the *extra expense* occasioned by this necessity, was deemed a just charge.

It is well known, that in every family, there are a number of necessary articles of furniture of considerable bulk, and small comparative value;—it was found, on calculation, that the loss on the sale of such articles, would be of less amount, than the expense of transportation: This loss which, on no principle, ought to be borne by individuals, was allowed, on principles, which the Committee will, on reflection, approve—*on prin-*

ciples of economy. It was to be expected, that notwithstanding the utmost care, some articles would be damaged, or destroyed by transportation: the obligation to repair this damage, was considered a consequence of the general principle, that the expenses of removal were to be borne by the public.

The general principles, upon which the accounts were to be adjusted, were, after full reflection on the subject, determined at Philadelphia, before the removal: if less liberal principles had been adopted, it is certain that some of the most capable, faithful and experienced men, in the public service, would have retired. If censure has followed the course, which was pursued, still severer censure would have followed a different course. There was, indeed, no ground to doubt that Congress considered those expenses as provided for; and that, having liberally provided for their own accommodation, it was not intended to oppress the Executive Departments.

The subsequent measures of the Legislature prove, that, in the judgment of that body, the allowances were not excessive. During the first session, after the removal of the Government to Washington, Congress granted the sum of eleven thousand eight hundred dollars to the Clerks in the Executive Offices, in addition to their former compensations. This grant was made, after it was publicly and universally known on what principles the expenses, incident to the removal of the government, had been adjusted. It was made, after the account, which I personally exhibited on retiring from office, had been printed in the newspapers, and every possible attempt made, by a favorite of the present administration, to excite prejudice against me, on the score of that account.

As the same account has been recently republished, with the opinion of the Committee, that I have received

five hundred and ten dollars, being the amount of the account by me exhibited, to which, according to the *strict letter of the law*, I had no legal title, it appears, that this is regarded as a serious accusation. The public are now informed of all the circumstances, and they must pronounce whether I have misjudged. I shall, indeed, feel the most sincere regret, if my reputation is injured for so trivial a consideration. During nearly twelve years, in which I was in the service of the United States, the aggregate amount of my expenses somewhat exceeded the different compensations I received. These expenses were much below those, of some zealous professors of economy. During this whole period, I contracted no debts, except for the necessary expenses of my family. These debts have been fully discharged. I do not recollect to have derived the emolument of a single dollar, from any business or services, except from the United States. I was, indeed, restrained by law, from engaging in those employments, which afforded a prospect of much profit: but the restriction, I imposed on myself, was still more extensive: under these circumstances, I cannot perceive, that there existed any obligation on my part, to renounce a just, though inconsiderable, claim on the public.

If the Committee had permitted their eyes to explore objects, not connected with individuals of the former administration, they might have found precedents, which would perhaps have restrained them from indulging strict interpretations, on subjects where there may exist an honest "*contrariety of opinion*." Unless it has been closed since his elevation to the Presidency, they might have found an account open with Mr. Jefferson as Minister to the Court of France; they might have discovered, that in May 1784, Congress declared *that the Salary of a Minister of a United States, at a*

foreign Court, should not exceed nine thousand dollars per annum, and that, notwithstanding this restriction, Mr. Jefferson retained, in addition to his Salary, and on the score of personal expenses, a sum considerably exceeding five hundred and ten dollars. I do not mention this as a mistake committed by Mr. Jefferson, I should scorn to justify a known error, even under the authority of his example.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE

Appointed to examine and report whether Monies drawn from the Treasury, have been faithfully applied to the objects for which they were appropriated, and whether the same have been regularly accounted for; and to report likewise whether any further arrangements are necessary to promote economy, enforce adherence to legislative restrictions, and secure the accountability of persons entrusted with public money. April 29, 1802, Read and ordered to lie on the table. (Duane Printer)

The law establishing the permanent and temporary seat of government (passed on the 16th of June, in the year seventeen hundred and ninety) provided "that all offices attached to the seat of government should be removed to this district on the first day of December, in the year one thousand eight hundred, by their respective holders," and declared that the necessary expenses of such removal should be defrayed out of the duties on imports and tonnage. This appropriation is indefinite in its nature, and perhaps some contrariety of opinion may exist as to the extent of the expense it was intended to cover; but the Committee conceive that a strict adher-